

Set up national reconciliation to deal with grievances

DENNIS AGYEI BOATENG / 10 FEBRUARY 2017



General Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana, Rev. Dr Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong

The General Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana, Rev. Dr Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, has called on the government to institute the National Reconciliation Act to promote peace in the Fourth Republic.



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According to him, the National Reconciliation Act, 2002 recommends appropriate redress for persons who have suffered any injury, hurt, damage, grievance or who have in any other manner been adversely affected by abuses and violations of their human rights arising from activities of public institutions and persons holding public office.

Rev. Opuni-Frimpong made this call when he chaired the 2nd annual Peace Lecture Organised by the Rotary Club of Accra West in collaboration with the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) in Accra last Wednesday.

We need peace

He said many civil societies had stopped spreading the word of peace after the election but there was a need for civil societies and non-government organisations (NGO) to continue to preach peace because the seizing of properties, attacks on political opponents, burning of tollbooths and insults had become the order of the day.

“I have realised that many people have grievances and are now retaliating. They just wait for an opportunity to express the pain within them and that is why we need to heal the wounds through the National Reconciliation Act,” he said.

He added that “instead of pushing the pain to the future, there must be a programme to address it. Sometime it is not conflict among different political parties, but it may be within a party,” he noted.

The reverend minister also mentioned that there was the need to sustain civil society groups to spread peace because they played key roles in addressing peace issues since peace was a collective responsibility.

Peace management

A senior lecturer at the Faculty of Law at the University of Ghana, Professor Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu (the guest speaker), spoke on the theme: “Growing our peace—Peace Management and humanitarian action.”

She said peace was fragile so “there is always a need to nurture it.”

Prof. Mensa-Bonsu explained that creating a new sense of community on social media enhanced access to information.

“Politicians can reach their electorate in chat rooms and by tweets and so eliminate those who block access to office holders for their own political ends,” she said.

Commenting on some challenges and the changing terrain of contemporary conflict, she stressed that these positive developments in social communication had been gratefully acknowledged and avidly embraced.

However, she said technology was equally available to the disaffected around the globe to serve negative ends.

Technological world

Prof. Mensa-Bonsu noted that the technological world had created challenges for governments to find solutions to every problem, but there should be a need to include charitable organisations to promote dialogue to promote peace in the country.

“The concept of conflict management explains that conflict is dynamic and must be assisted, but cannot completely be eliminated,” she reiterated.

She advised the government and civil society groups to strategise to solve conflicts to promote peace.

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